

palestine perspectives

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Palestine Lives

The Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization

President-elect Reagan's implication that the Palestinians are not a group of people with a national identity but rather a bunch of pitiful refugees and that the PLO is simply a "terrorist organization" reflects his own naiveté and ignorance of the Palestinian situation and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. In reality the Palestinian problem is the central issue and cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A just and lasting peace in the Middle East will never crystallize without a solution to the Palestinian situation. The entire problem is a political one and not a question of refugees. Palestinian rights to national self-determination, national independence and the right to return must be recognized by the U.S. The Palestinians must be free to determine on their own and democratically who represents them, and this has already been determined.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is the legitimate official representative of all the Palestinian people.

It is a democratically elected representative, a government in exile which has a carefully balanced legislative, executive and judiciary branch.

The Palestine National Council (Congress) serves as the legislative body, a parliament in exile. It includes 290 elected representatives from different political parties and resistance organizations, professional, business and labor unions, and popularly elected Councils from different refugee camps and Palestinian communities in exile. The Council also has seats for elected representatives from the occupied territories.

The Council elects the Executive Committee, composed of 19 members and a chairman. The Committee serves as a Cabinet, runs the daily affairs of Palestinians and is accountable to the Council.

The Executive Committee overruns the work of a large bureaucracy composed of different Departments: Political, Financial, National Funds, Social Affairs and Welfare, Military, Medical (Red Crescent), Information and Guidance, Education and Culture, etc. Each of the Departments has its structure, budget and hierarchy and deals with the socio-economic and political affairs of a people in exile. The PLO thus oversees the work of hundreds of schools, clinics and hospitals, factories, foreign affairs, finance and budget offices and so on.

This governmental structure has been in existence since 1964, when the PLO was first established. It has become a defacto government, reinforced by the well-



balanced and democratically chosen representatives and delegates.

In the absence of a state, and after thirty years of exile, dispersion and neglect, the Palestinian people have rallied around this defacto government in exile. The refugees gave it the strongest support, hundreds of thousands in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the occupied West Bank and Gaza joined it and carried arms to defend it in times of crisis (the Jordan 1970 war, the Lebanese 1975-77 war).

The PLO has been recognized by all the Arab States and is a full member of the League of Arab States. It has been recognized by more than 120 states in the world, and it has political diplomatic offices in more than 100 countries. It has played a leading role at the Islamic States Conferences, the Non-Aligned Countries Conferences, and has strengthened its ties with Socialist, African and Latin American states.

The PLO and its recognized institutions are opposed to terrorism. In the last six years, the PLO has acted as a political and diplomatic force in the Third World and Europe and has not been involved in any acts of "terrorism". Moreover, the PLO has publicly condemned acts of terrorism (recent attacks against Israeli synagogues and businesses in Europe) and clearly said that only Zionism and Israel benefit from these irresponsible acts.

Palestinian resistance in the occupied Palestine territories, however, is a different matter. The PLO has a legitimate legal and moral right to resist Israeli military occupation. Resistance is a result of occupation and it will continue and increase inside Israel, until the Israeli government recognizes Palestinian National Right, ends its occupation and abides by the United Nations' resolutions on Palestinian rights to self-determination, independence and the right of return.

All these facts clearly indicate that the PLO is a defacto government in exile, a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and a real political and military reality in the Middle East.

The new U.S. administration must shoulder its responsibilities if it wants to deal with the serious economic and political issues facing it. Antagonizing the Arab states and the Palestinians will not help solve these complex problems, but will only complicate them and make it more difficult to deal with the deteriorating economic situation.

Finally, any official American who talks about the PLO as a "terrorist" organization, not only runs counter to the above facts, but shows that the United States government repeats Israeli propaganda and slander, and will further mobilize the Palestinians to oppose U.S. policies in the Middle East and put an end to whatever remains of its power and goodwill in the area.

Letters to the Editor

Sept. 3, 1980

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is \$10 for 12 issues of Palestine Perspectives. We have read several issues of your magazine and feel it is an accurate account of what is going on in Palestine and here in the States. So keep up the work!

Sincerely,

M. Jabar
Kirkville, MO

Dear Sirs,

I am glad that for once there is a magazine that shows some of the actual Arab-Israeli conflicts, rather than some of the distorted Jewish views that are reported in some of the American papers. I have seen some of your previous issues and was very

impressed. I would now like to subscribe to Palestine Perspectives and also obtain any other pro-Palestine literature available. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future as to the subscription rates of your magazine.

Sincerely,

E. Stevenson
Deerfield, Mass.

Dear Folks,

We, of the Jewish Alliance Against Zionism, are a group of Jewish men and women who have been doing political work around the Middle East since 1978. As a group, we educate ourselves and others about the nature and practices of Zionism,

work in coalitions against anti-Semitism, and work in solidarity with Palestinian organizations. As a result of the recent Israeli actions in the occupied territories and the increase in bombings of southern Lebanon, we have decided to focus our work for the next year on the development of an effective program in opposition to these actions.

We are therefore seeking as much information as possible from groups presently doing similar work. Information that we gather will help us to determine the direction and nature of the work that we will undertake. In addition, we hope to lay a groundwork for future coalition activities with groups which share our concerns.

Jewish Alliance Against Zionism
San Francisco, Calif.

Peace In The Land Of Peace

(Excerpts from Reverend Aiyad's Message at the Black Pastors Conference)

Allow me, Reverend friends and brothers in Christ, to expound to you some aspects of the sufferings of the Palestine people, who no other people in the world today suffers more the agony of exile, degradation, persecution, repression, oppression, and foreign occupation than this people; and I have to note that there are some similarities between your people and my people. Both are denied, with some differences, their human rights, as your people still in their homes and lands and can find means to live and obtain some of his civil rights, as a result of the struggle he strongly sustained and the sacrifices he willingly offered. But my people expelled by the force of the arms from their homes and lands is scattered in many angles of the world, the majority of whom lives in torn tents under miserable conditions; some of you, representing your community, came to Lebanon and visited the refugee camps and saw with your own eyes the misery in which this people lives. But there is a common and basic denominator which is the will to continue the struggle till we achieve our aims and attain fully our legitimate rights.

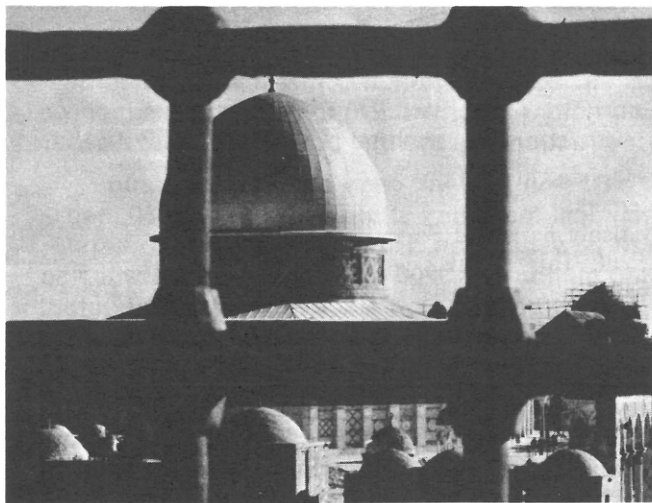
Our people in the occupied territories not only live in torn and miserable tents, but furthermore, is subjected to harassment, torture, oppression, mass arrests, demolition of houses, confiscation of

property, expropriation of lands, restriction orders, deportation outside the country, etc., etc. These practices of the Israeli occupier rendering the life impossible to the indigenous Arab population is to compel them to leave the land on which they lived and their fathers generations long before; the ultimate intent of the Israelis is to have a Zionist racist state, one hundred per cent.

Although our people are a peace-loving people, opposed to bloodshed and violence, he engaged in armed struggle as the only way left to all oppressed people after having

knocked at all the doors: the UN which took 250 resolutions till now, in our favor, without any effect, the superpowers, which look after only their own interests, the Arab states who, instead of helping us to regain our right to return to our homes and to establish our independent sovereign state, they were bargaining on our cause for their own interests. Having realized all that, we decided to take our Cause in our own hands and to resort to the only means available to us: the armed struggle.

Continued on p. 8)



West Bank Sojourn

2nd of 3 parts

By: Walter Lehn

Late one morning, I was in a coffee shop in Ramallah when two Israeli soldiers came in. Immediately the atmosphere tensed noticeably, though it quickly became apparent that their purpose was to have a cup of coffee, not to check on the people there. Since I was sitting alone at a table, and there were no unoccupied ones, they asked (in English) if they could join me; my response of course was to invite them to do so. Eventually I was able to maneuver the conversation to the subject of the occupation and the treatment of the Palestinians by the occupation forces, a subject very much on my mind at that time, having witnessed that morning an incident of (in my view) rather brutal behaviour by the forces. When I suggested that such rough handling of the local residents might well be unproductive of the behaviour and attitudes desired by the occupation administration, indeed probably only stiffened resistance, one of the soldiers responded: "We have to be firm. Besides, they are only Arabs. Arabs are uncivil and shout at each other; they understand no other language."

The Israeli occupation forces tend to be conscious of and deferential to tourists, especially Westerners. A bus load of tourists will invariably be waved on and not stopped at all. This explains why tourists can visit the occupied area and often remain essentially unaware of the preoccupation with security and the elaborate apparatus to ensure it. I once asked a tourist who told me of having been on several bus tours in the West Bank about security checks along the roads. He was entirely unaware that this was the purpose of the road blocks. Different explanations had been given by different tour guides: The checks were to catch terrorists reported to be in the area; or the checks were to remove from the roads incompetent, and frequently unlicensed, drivers or unsafe vehicles. Both, from the point of view of an uninformed tourist, plausible and reasonable—though of course misleading—explanations. That the second of these explanations, though a legitimate function of road checks, is unlikely is sug-



West Bank Tension



Concern with Security

gested by the fact that I never saw a driver asked to produce his driving license, only his identity card.

Concern with security leads the occupation forces to frown on demonstrations, even the most innocuous — a small group of students walking or standing silently with signs. I once saw a group of about a dozen high school students in Ramallah carrying signs saying, "Palestine is Arab." Occupation forces, in riot gear, broke it up with considerable ruthlessness. The group was charged and scattered; A lesson in submissiveness or training for tomorrow's terrorists?

Strikes in West Bank towns are similarly discouraged. When the Israeli-Egyptian talks began in January 1978, strikes were frequently called for and sometimes

organized. On one day, most of the shops in the central area of Ramallah remained closed. In an attempt to break up the strike, occupation forces armed with wrecking bars, about a metre in length, went along the streets and demanded under threat of detention that the owners immediately open their shops. Some of the owners were near their shops and opened them, no doubt having learned on other occasions what was the better part of valour. Others either were not present or chose not to obey the order. When a shop was not immediately opened, the soldiers inserted the wrecking bars under the iron shutters covering the front of the shop and applied pressure, breaking either the lock or the hasp. The shutters were then raised and the

door forced open, sometimes broken; thus the shop was open! To protect his goods, the owner (or a friend) at this point had no alternative but to occupy the shop, which could not now be closed or locked.

I was taken on a sad tour of parts of the Old City of Jerusalem by a social worker who had lived and worked there for over twenty-five years. Large areas, among others, in the so-called Jewish Quarter — though most of the inhabitants before 1948 were not Jews — have been expropriated and the owners and/or tenants forced to leave. Some of the buildings have been remodelled; this can be in relatively minor ways, little more than redecoration, or more extensively: adding (or removing) one or more floors or wings, changing the location or style of entrance, partitioning large rooms, thus making them into small apartments, etc. Other buildings, sometimes whole blocks, have been demolished and replaced by new ones. Much of this activity could legitimately be seen as urban renewal were it not for one fact: the new or renewed housing is not available under any circumstances to the former inhabitants, or indeed to any non-Jews. As a result of such developments, which at times involve even changing the location of streets, the character of the Old City of Jerusalem is slowly but surely being transformed, not only physically, but also demographically and culturally. There is no reason to assume that these results are unintentional. On the contrary, the intention is openly proclaimed and enforced by the administrative and judicial structures of the state.

The most dramatic examples of thinning out the Palestinian population I saw were in the refugee camps near Rafah in the Gaza Strip; some 75 percent of the inhabitants of the Strip are refugees. The shelters in the camps are close together, and the unpaved open spaces which serve as streets are narrow and often dead-end, making it impossible to pass through with large vehicles at many places. To accomplish this, and in the process reduce the population to an acceptable number of inhabitants, the occupation forces ordered people out of their shelters and bulldozed large (from 40-50 metres in width) "streets" which now run the length and breadth of the camps. In the process hundreds of shelters were destroyed and thousands of Palestinians made homeless, many for the second or third time, and left to fend for themselves; some were offered trans-



Israeli soldier marking home for demolition

portation in trucks to El Arish in the occupied Sinai. Apparently Israel, like European and American states in 1917, finds it easy to be generous with other peoples' land and property.

Though Zionist institutions like the Jewish Agency and the Jewish Nation Fund, and spokesmen such as Rabbi Moshe Levinger of the *Gush Emunim*, feel no need to offer this justification, the government of Israel insists that security is the reason for the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied areas. Yet how these settlements ensure Israel's security is certainly not obvious. Many of them in the West Bank (except for those encircling East Jerusalem and in the Jordan Valley) have only a handful of hastily-erected shelters, though the amount of land provided for them may be extensive, running for some hundreds of acres. The entire settlement is surrounded by high fences — barbed wire or chainlink, or both — with a single entry point manned around the clock by an armed guard. These settlements remind the visitor — with a somewhat longer memory than most tourists exhibit — most of all of the "stockade and tower" settlements established outside of the proposed borders of the Jewish state foreseen in the partition plan of the Peel Commission in 1937. The objectives of these settlements

then were quite simply to expand the foreseen borders by creating facts, both demographic and territorial; it is difficult not to see the same objectives for the settlements established after 1967.

Rather than contributing significantly to Israel's security, many of the settlements — more accurately, armed ghettos — in the interior of the West Bank appear to me to be vulnerable outposts, whose defence might be costly and whose inhabitants might have to be evacuated in the event of serious hostilities. It is interesting to note recent (June 1979) explicit and public recognition of these facts by two obviously knowledgeable Israelis, Lt. Generals Matityahu Peled and Haim Bar-Lev, the latter a former chief-of-staff. In statements to the Israeli high court during hearings on the government's expropriation orders for Palestinian land for the recently established Elon Moreh settlement near Nablus, the largest city in the West Bank, they testified that the settlement would not contribute to Israel's security. After the hearing General Bar-Lev said to a radio interviewer: "The government tries to cover its reasons for settlement with security considerations. According to my professional opinion there is no connection with security. This is an excuse and not a reason."

We Only Want To Be Free To Fight Israel

Second of Two Part Interview with Abu-Jihad, Member of Palestine National Council

Q. The PLO has been given diplomatic recognition by an increasing number of countries. Do you see more successes on the horizon? What are your hopes for Europe?

Abu Jihad: We have succeeded in explaining our rights to many countries, such as India, Portugal, and Turkey. There will be many more. The Common Market countries are not considering our rights. That they are even discussing our rights is a step forward. But because they are tied to US policy, we have no hope they will go forward independently.

Q. But do you think the Common Market states can influence the United States to change its policy toward the PLO?

Abu Jihad: The Common Market is tied to the US. We have followed their political steps in the past months and what the US wants the Common Market countries to do.

Q. Yet there is more movement toward the PLO in Europe than there is in the United States.

Abu Jihad: Yes, and we'll keep on forcing them to support our rights. This can be done through the economic and oil power of the Arab states; Europe must be shown that they must support the Palestinian people. We believe this will bring us some progress but as we now watch we're not expecting from Europe any progressive steps. We don't believe Europe can pressure the United States; it is the opposite, they are limited by US pressure.

Q. Isn't it paradoxical that while you are strengthening your political and diplomatic status abroad, some of your strongest Arab state supporters are in serious domestic trouble?

Abu Jihad: Let's look at when this trouble is happening. It's at a time when we're having great international success and when Palestinians everywhere are unified with the PLO. It comes at a time when we have made the Arab people everywhere support our struggle against Israel and at a time when we have brought world attention to Israel's occupation and US imperialism.

Is it really surprising then, to see now the fingers of US policy, the fingers of the CIA,



when we look at the problems that were created in Syria, between Iran and Iraq, and between Iran and the Arabs?

Q. So you believe the United States has a hand in some of the troubles now plaguing some Arab states. How would this instability effect the PLO?

Abu Jihad: The trouble between the Arabs and Iran was paved by US policy. But we are trying to bring peace between them so they can face the main enemy, Israel. But American policy has been to heat up the area and to increase the tension between the Arabs and Iran. This would divide up the area and shift attention and concern away from the main target, the Occupied territories. These events could effect the main battle and effect the PLO's military and political efforts. But we hope that the Arab world with Iran will settle their problems so they can then directly face the main target, Israeli occupation and US policy.

Q. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which closely followed the Iranian revolution, sent US policy into a tailspin. There are people in Washington who now argue that the US should accept the PLO and Palestinian rights as a way to reduce popular turmoil in the Middle East and minimize the potential

for Soviet involvement. Do you see, or expect to see, any such change in US policy?

Abu Jihad: Oh no, not at all. The US has always been against us; its policy is tightly tied to Begin and Israel. There has been little change in US policy since Afghanistan and in the future we don't expect to see anything more. In fact, during the US elections, we expect to see a race between the candidates on who can offer more services to Israel and can be most against Palestinian rights and against the PLO.

But the United States should understand the importance of the PLO in the area and the world. We deal with many problems. Our relation with Iran is well known and we are trying to end problems in the Arab world. The PLO has explained the Afghanistan problem with Iran and the Soviet Union. In India, Prime Minister Gandhi appreciated our efforts in this field too. So we have a number of activities throughout the world. Yet the United States continues to reject us and refuses to even consider the importance of the PLO in the area.

Q. So what are currently United States designs toward the region?

Abu Jihad: The United States is trying very hard to build a pact among the Arab states, particularly with the Gulf countries. It's an attempt to bring them together against the dangerous situation in Afghanistan.

But we have raised questions about this policy. We have asked all the Arab states to question why America is interested in the Islam of Afghanistan but not interested in the Islam of Iran? Why are the Americans crying about the Islam in Afghanistan but not crying about the Islam in Jerusalem which is the first Holy Place in Islam? We have told the people that it is very dangerous if you believe the United States Government claims because they do only what benefits them and nothing else. Therefore, everyone should stand against the United States because they are only trying to use Afghanistan as a cause to collect the people against the Soviet Union. And we consider the Soviet Union at this time — in the Palestinian case, to be on our side.

by R. Wingerter

Large American Church Group Supports Palestinian Cause



In an unanimous vote on November 6, the National Council of Churches, which has 40 million members, adopted a Middle East policy statement having analyzed and discussed it for more than eight hours.

This statement is the compilation of an N.C.C. panel which visited five Middle Eastern countries and contacted a variety of concerned organizations in the Middle East and the United States about the subject. The panel, established in Sept. 1979, reviewed the situation in the Middle East as a whole and observed that security between nations and people can be achieved only through "relations of trust." If approved, American Jewish leaders fear, it may nudge American public opinion in a direction not as favorable to Israel as it has been.

The relatively progressive stand of the N.C.C. is a result of many factors, not least of which is the determination of members to view the situation in a just and objective manner. But also helpful is the presence in the N.C.C. of the Orthodox Archdioceses of

America, the Black Caucus, the Methodist church, and others. The personal involvement of Frank Maria, a Massachusetts-born activist of Syrian parentage has also greatly influenced the direction of the N.C.C. Maria is described by some of his colleagues as an "effective lobbyist on behalf of the issue of Palestine and other Arab issues." Frank Maria, a member of the N.C.C. executive committee is also chairperson for the Middle East department and Arab refugees in the Antiochian Orthodox church.

The panel's report presented to the N.C.C.'s Board of Governors last spring has since been revised and made more explicit in its support of Palestinian views. The revisions, it is reported, grew out of the controversy surrounding the "resignation" of Andrew Young after his meeting with Zuhdi Terzi, the P.L.O. representative to the United Nations.

The findings of the panel as expressed in the current statement include the

recognition of the right of all peoples to self-determination as granted them under international law. N.C.C. thus finds it "appropriate. . . to assist those seeking recognition and protection of their rights." The N.C.C. panel also determined through its fact-finding mission to the area that the region's per capita military expenditures are much higher than other regions', while expenditure on improvement in their quality of life are not. The statement, therefore, calls for nations of the area to reduce military expenditure, strengthen the role of the United Nations, tighten controls on arms and halt nuclear proliferation.

Israel and the Palestinians

The proposed statement recognizes the conflict in the Middle East as a "conflict between two nationalisms," Palestinian Arab and Jewish. Although it is a regional conflict, the Middle Eastern issue has the potential for becoming a global one. A solution therefore is necessary to remove

the threat to world peace which it poses.

The statement which will be presented for a second reading in New York City on Nov. 6 reviews attempts at solving this conflict. U.N. resolution 242 was found to be "insufficient in itself" due to its treatment of the Palestinian people "only as refugees." Cited is U.N. General Assembly resolution 3236 which "affirms the right of the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, as well as their right to return" to their property in what is now Israel. But as a General Assembly resolution, the statement continues, it has little force behind it and certainly no means of implementation. Subsequently in 1977 came the joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. communique favoring a comprehensive negotiated settlement, "ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." However, the government of Israel announced immediately its total rejection of this formula and as a consequence it was refuted by the government of the United States as well.

Another attempt at resolving the Middle Eastern impasse came after the Sadat initiative and the conclusion of the Camp David accords: that of the Egyptian-Israeli "peace" treaty. The N.C.C. statement argues that the Camp David accords and "peace" treaty have "isolated Egypt" from the rest of the Arab world and have "not influenced others in the region, Arab states and the Palestinian people, to join."

The agreement between Israel and Egypt has excluded the Palestinian people themselves from becoming a party to the negotiations process and does not provide "an agreed-upon mechanism to accomplish this." And in a departure from U.S. government policy, as well as from that of many other bodies in the American and world arenas, the proposed statement recognizes that "the Palestine Liberation Organization functions as the only organized voice of the Palestinian people and appears to be the only body able to negotiate a settlement on their behalf. The earlier version of this statement made no mention of a P.L.O. role, while it supported the right of the people of Palestine to choose their representatives.

This clause in particular is being harshly attacked by Jewish organizations in the United States. Major Jewish organizations have conveyed to the N.C.C. Board of Governors their opposition to any role for the P.L.O., which is seen by them as a "terrorist organization" that does not represent the people of Palestine. Jewish criticism of the N.C.C. statement is being voiced regardless of the fact that it also calls on the Palestine National Council, the legislative body of the P.L.O., to recognize Israel's "right to exist as a sovereign state." The panel's proposal calls for "reciprocal

recognition of the right of self-determination" for both the Palestinian and the Jewish people. Jewish groups, such as the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, have earlier, in both 1977 and 1979, released reports accusing the N.C.C. of being anti-Israel.

In order to achieve mutual recognition of the right to self-determination the N.C.C. calls for:

- "Cessation of acts of violence" of all forms and by all parties.
- Arab and Palestinian recognition of the state of Israel "with secure, defined and recognized borders," and recognition by "Israel of the right of national self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs" and of their right to choose their representatives as well as to establish a "Palestinian entity, including a sovereign state" on the land of Palestine. The N.C.C. also concludes any change in the status quo with respect to more settlements, land and water issues would increase resistance and lead to further violations of human rights and thus decrease the prospects for peace.
- International guarantees for both Israel and the future sovereign state of

not be seen as necessarily changing the views on the Middle East, the P.L.O. and a Palestinian state, of 40 million Americans. The N.C.C., it should be kept in mind, is not an ideologically-oriented political party requiring allegiance in support of its policies. Nor is it possible to predict whether members will in fact lobby their representatives in Congress in favor of the Board of Governors' decisions. If adopted, however, the statement could become grounds for serious debate within a large section of the Christian community here, and if taken seriously by members the statement could without any doubt have a favorable influence on the understanding of the American public of the Palestinian point of view.

N.C.C. support of Palestinian rights, coming from a church community which is morally and human rights-oriented and which cannot be accused of hatred, discrimination or anti-Semitism, is a great boost to the Palestinian just and moral stand in the United States and world. This is an achievement which, even if not translated politically in America, will have considerable psychological after-effects.



Palestine.

- Solution to the problem of refugees, including their "compensation and return."
- The city of Jerusalem and its importance to the world community should be for not altering its final status. Its destiny, the statement reads, "should be viewed in terms of people and not only in terms of shrines," and thus the city's final status should be negotiated between the parties involved.

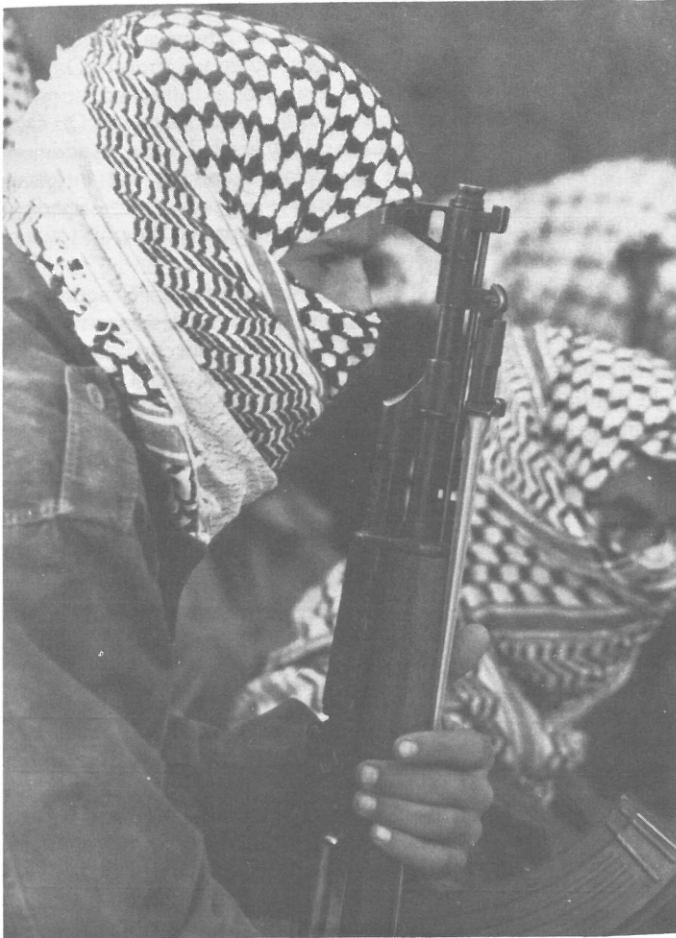
The N.C.C. claims a "particular responsibility" in the solution of this conflict in the United States by upholding a "holistic" perspective rather than a partial one. Peace in the Middle East, the N.C.C. argues, requires justice for both peoples concerned. It addresses its 40 million members to act to bring about understanding of its goals in the United States.

Though very significant, the effect of this statement on the American scene should

Excerpts from Rev. Alyod's . . .
(Continued from p. 3)

From this forum I declare, in the name of the Chairman Arafat, the Palestinian solariety with your struggle for your civil rights, which are still ignored, by all means at our disposal. And we are hopeful, rather confident that your honorable assembly will take resolution to stand with the just cause of our people, helping him to reach his legitimate rights in self-determination and in establishing his independent sovereign state on his own soil, to have his distinguishing identity and his national flag. As I beg you my brothers and sisters on this occasion to pray Almighty God to have mercy on our people and that an end would be put to his sufferings and calvary and that justice be done and real peace be restored in the land of peace; the peace of God which is beyond all understandings, appeasing hatred, putting love and charity in the hearts of all men of good will.

Resistance



Defiance

You may fasten my chains
 Deprive me of my books and tobacco
 You may fill my mouth with earth
 Poetry will feed my heart, like blood
 It is salt to the bread
 And liquid to the eye
 I will write it with nails, eye sockets and
 daggers
 I will recite it in my prison cell—
 In the bathroom—
 In the stable—
 Under the whip—
 Under the chains—
 In spite of my handcuffs
 I have a million nightingales
 On the branches of my heart
 Singing the song of liberation.

Mahmoud Darwish

Enemy Of The Sun

I may — if you wish — lose my livelihood
 I may sell my shirt and bed.
 I may work as a stone cutter,
 A street sweeper, a porter.
 I may clean your stores
 Or rummage your garbage for food.
 I may lie down hungry,
 O enemy of the sun,
 But
 I shall not compromise
 And to the last pulse in my veins
 I shall resist.
 You may take the last strip of my land,
 Feed my youth to prison cells.
 You may plunder my heritage.
 You may burn my books, my poems
 Or feed my flesh to the dogs.
 You may spread a web of terror
 On the roofs of my village,
 O enemy of the sun,

But
 I shall not compromise
 And to the last pulse in my veins
 I shall resist.
 You may put out the light in my eyes.
 You may deprive me of my mother's kisses.
 You may curse my father, my people.
 You may distort my history,
 You may deprive my children of a smile
 And of life's necessities.
 You may fool my friends with a borrowed
 face.
 You may build walls of hatred around me.
 You may glue my eyes to humiliations,
 O enemy of the sun,
 But
 I shall not compromise
 And to the last pulse in my veins
 I shall resist.

O enemy of the sun
 The decorations are raised at the port.
 The ejaculations fill the air,
 A glow in the hearts,
 And in the horizon
 A sail is seen
 Challenging the wind
 And the depths.
 It is Ulysses
 Returning home
 From the sea of loss
 It is the return of the sun,
 Of my exiled ones
 And for her sake, and his
 I swear
 I shall not compromise
 And to the last pulse in my veins
 I shall resist.
 Resist—and resist.

Samih Al Qassem

A Witness from the Nafha Concentration Camp Speaks Out

A young Palestinian, Mustapha Tawfiq Abu Zahra was interviewed by the Israeli daily newspaper *Al-Hamishmar* after being transferred to the Jerusalem Islamic Philanthropic Hospital in bad health condition after being on a hunger strike for twelve days.

Abu Zahra is quoted as saying. "It is not a secret that we hold political views, but our decision to go on this particular hunger strike is not of a political nature whatsoever, the strike comes after we reached a point of hopelessness inside this dreadful detention".

Abu Zahra continued to address *Al-Hamishmar's* interviewer by expressing the inability of the prisoners to understand how this prison was built on the worst site whereby the temperature rises tremendously in the morning causing the prisoners to suffocate and drops at night so that they nearly freeze to death.

Abu Zahra goes on to add that he was transferred to Nafha prison a few days after it was opened and that he and other prisoners were soon to realise that the main purpose of this prison was the breaking down of the prisoner's morale, for the prisoners live in intolerable, overcrowded small rooms closed from all sides.

"We eat on the floor and wash our dishes in the same lavatory used as a W.C. We nearly have no air and the food is so bad that we refuse to eat at certain instances.

Concerning the negotiations between our representatives and the prison authorities, Abu Zahra said the following: "We negotiated with them more than five times but nothing came out of it. Before coming to Nafha I was in the Ramleh prison which is equally notorious but there is no point of comparison between it and the hell on earth called Nafha. In short we decided to go on the hunger strike because this step was our ultimate weapon. We planned it during a whole month and carried it out before we heard about the Women's International Conference held in Copenhagen and before the U.N. General Session took place. You can see therefore that our movement was not politically motivated, it was only an attempt to better our living conditions.

Force-Feeding Through Pipes:

At the beginning of the week twenty six of our colleagues were transferred to Ramleh and on the date of our arrival we were forcefully fed some artificial food stuffs. Each one of us was summoned individually to the clinic where we were ordered to eat or else, be fed by pipes introduced through the mouth into the stomach, after we refused, the pipes were eventually introduced and this was sometimes done brutally, thus we heard the loud pain moans and screams of two colleagues. Force feeding through pipes is a horrible thing to remember, Abu Zahra finished the interview saying: "It is true I got released today but my thoughts are still there with my colleagues. I call upon the Israeli public opinion as well as the world public opinion to take actions for the improvement of detention conditions in Nafha. . . Nafha means a renewed and daily perpetrated punishment.

Truly civilized people do not act like this. . . This prison should be closed or else the prevailing conditions should be improved and equalized with those that Jewish prisoners enjoy".

Arafat Sends Message to Cyprus International Conference

Brothers and friends, allow me to convey my thanks and gratitude to the friendly Cypriot people who have sponsored your conference as an expression of the Cypriot stand — the government and people, and nationalist, progressive and democratic forces — which has always supported the struggle of our people and nation.

Your conference is holding its sessions under the shadow of hot and successive developments to which our Arab nation has been subjected.

As you know our current efforts in this connection through the nonaligned movement and through the good-will mission, which has been set up within this framework, are part of our persistent, sincere and responsible work to stop the fighting and spare the bloodshed.

Brothers, from our position in the frontline trenches and daily violent clashes with the enemies of our nation and the enemies of our area, we urge all nationalist and progressive forces in our world to support our efforts for ending the Iraqi-Iranian war and sparing bloodshed in the interest of the whole area.

Brothers and friends, we in the Palestinian revolution view the explosive situation in our area with a thorough, strategic and responsible perspective. Under all circumstances, which in most cases are difficult, we do not lose our faith

and conviction that the future will be bright for us and our coming generations.

New Wave of Israeli Aggression

Beginning on Oct. 16 Israeli forces and isolationist allies shelled the Nabatiyeh region preceded by intensive overflights of the Tyre region by Israeli aircraft. On Oct. 22, Israeli war planes attacked about 5 kilometers northeast of Damour. On Oct. 27, Israeli artillery shelled Sidon. In addition, Israeli war planes carried out intensive reconnaissance swoops over the Saadiyat area between Damour and the port town of Sidon.

This new wave of Israeli aggression coincides with the anti-Palestinian remarks made by U.S. presidential candidates and it seems such remarks are being regarded by Israel as the green light for the Israeli aggression into Lebanon.

Arafat Addresses UNESCO Conference

PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasser Arafat delivered a speech at the annual UNESCO Conference, held in Belgrade on Oct. 27, 1980.

Beginning with a review of the history of oppression of the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America during the colonial era and its aftermath, Arafat gave his full support for the conference's resolutions demanding the establishment of a new information order that would replace the current domination of the media by US imperialism.

Arafat went on to describe the sorry



history of the usurpation of Palestine by Zionists, showing how these Zionist settler colonialists evolved into an aggressive military machine meting out systematic terror to the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples in South Lebanon. Arafat traced the parallel evolution of the Palestinian struggle in a region of soaring tensions:

"For more than 30 years our people have been struggling and striving for existence to gain their rights to turn, to self-determination and to establish their own independent state on their Palestinian

national soil.

These 30 years have made of our homeland, Palestine, one of the most explosive points in the world. What is happening today in South Lebanon and Palestine, and also that which is happening on the Iraqi-Iranian borders is clear evidence of that.

"The world should know that there are 4 million Palestinians with no home or living under occupation. It must know that millions of Arabs are suffering from the role of the racist watchdog which the Israeli aggressor is playing to impose its patron's tutelage and encourage backwardness in our Arab world. We must further note the attempts of the American administration to control the gulf with its oil and its strategic positions using all forms of means and methods. For this reason, it has sent its fleets to the Gulf area and the Indian Ocean. Also appearing is its rapid deployment forces, not to mention the military bases in Egypt, Somalia and Kenya.

Paying tribute to the Palestinian peoples' unshakeable attachment to cultural and educational values, Arafat concluded with a call for solidarity between the struggling peoples of the world, situating the Palestinian revolution in the mainstream of their struggle for progress, democracy and social justice.

Reagan Insults Palestinian People & PLO

Most people were left surprised by the landslide that elected Reagan. Not quite so surprising were his remarks about the Palestinian people and the PLO. Throughout his campaign Reagan did not deviate from a totally pro-Israeli line claiming the PLO is a "terrorist organization" and insisting Israel is a strategic base for U.S. imperialist interests in the Middle East. In exactly the same tone, President elect Reagan again made anti-Palestinian statements at his first press conference after the elections.

In response to Reagan's attitude towards the Palestinian people and his naive remarks about Palestinians and the PLO, the Palestine Information Office in Washington, D.C. issued the following statement.

President elect Reagan's characterization of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a "terrorist" organization shows his total bias to Israel and his prejudice against and ignorance of the Palestinian people. This clearly shows he will be one-sided and will not work for a just and genuine peace that will include the Palestinian people.

Reagan's irresponsible statements will damage America's image among the Arab and the third world countries, and will further damage American interests in the Middle East because Reagan is showing hostility to four million Palestinians.

The PLO is the elected official representative of the Palestinian people, and it has been recognized by all Arab states and it is an official member of the Arab League. It has been recognized by more than 125 states and is a member of the United Nations. It has offices in over one hundred countries. It is a political and military reality in the Middle East, and represents the aspirations of all the Palestinians.

It seems Reagan is giving Israel the green light to attack Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and commit new genocide against the Palestinian people.

We urge all peace loving and progressive American organizations to protest Reagan's statements and protest the continuous Israeli attacks against the Palestinian people.

Excerpt from Statement by Chairman Arafat about Mayor's Deportation



On 20 October the Zionist occupation authorities formed a military committee under the pretext of hearing the defense pleas of Brothers Fahd al-Qawasimah and Muhammad Milhem, the mayors of Hebron and Halhul, who were unjustly and arbitrarily deported from the homeland on 2 May 1980 by the occupation authorities. Furthermore, the occupation authorities barred the return to Shaykh Rajab at-Tamimi, who was deported with the two mayors.

The occupation authorities have issued a new decision confirming the decision to deport the three brothers. The occupation authorities have thus disregarded the three strugglers' legitimate right to return to their homeland. The occupation authorities have also challenged the resolution passed by the UN General Assembly calling for their return. These authorities have also defied the numerous appeals which have been

made by international establishments and organizations and which have all called for the return of the three brothers.

Mayors on Hunger Strike

Mayor Fahd Qawasmeh and Mohammad Milhem went on a hunger strike in protest of the Israeli military panel's decision to uphold their expulsion from the West Bank. On October 19 the mayors began their hunger strike after the mayors attended a makeshift courtroom on the Allenby Bridge. Although the mayors had been allowed to return to the West Bank during the proceedings, they had been denied permission to enter their own towns as had been implied.

The case is currently before the Israeli Supreme Court and new arguments are being submitted by the prosecution. The mayors however, broke their hunger strike on November 12 after 23 days without food or water.



Demonstrations Against Begin's Visit to U.S.

American supporters of the Palestinian cause joined the Palestinian community in both New York City and Detroit to protest the visit of Israeli terrorist leader Menachem Begin, who is seeking more American weapons and military hardware to carry on Israeli attacks against Lebanon and the Palestinians. In New York, the Palestine Solidarity Committee sponsored the November 11 demonstration calling on all Americans to oppose Begin's visit and to protest the continued Israeli bombing of South Lebanon. In Detroit, the November 13th demonstration included hundreds of Palestinians and American supporters who expressed full support for Palestinian rights to freedom, while Begin was addressing a gathering of Jewish organizations and calling on American Jews and Soviet Jews to emigrate and settle in the occupied territories.

Birzeit University Closed Down

On Nov. 14, Birzeit University was closed down for 1 week by Israeli military authorities. The students had organized activities for Palestine week on campus. Gabi Baranki, Vice President of Birzeit was informed that the University be closed down as a result of the festivities intended for Palestine week. This year's program included an exhibition of West Bank artists' work, a book exhibit, an exhibit of local products, lectures, plays, folk dancing and other cultural events.

One day prior to the issued notice, 3 students were taken off buses bound for Birzeit. Those 3 students are still being detained.

Birzeit protests the closure and regards it as an act of collective punishment aimed at disrupting the normal function of an independent academic institution. This is especially apparent because the closure extends 5 days beyond the end of Palestine week. The University also protests the detention of 3 students whose arbitrary detention clearly implies is also aimed at punishing the University as a whole.

Israeli Troops Open Fire On Students

On Nov. 15, Palestinian students throughout the West Bank protested the closure of Birzeit University.

As many as 7 students were shot by Israeli military police in Ramallah. Four students were shot at Bethlehem University. Again, on Nov. 17, Israeli troops opened fire on a group of young women students wounding a 17 year-old in El-Bireh. Thereafter, the town was placed under curfew.

Literature and Resources

Video Cassette on the Palestinian Children's Folk Troupe, 30 minutes of Palestinian Song & Dance ... \$35.00
Colorful Christmas Cards from the Palestine Liberation Organization \$.50 each
Palestine's Poet — Abu Salma (in English & Arabic) \$1.00 each
H.I. Hussaini, *The Palestine Problem: An Annotated bibliography, 1967-80* \$2.00
James Zogby & Jack O'dell (ed.) *Afro-Americans Stand Up for Middle East Peace* \$2.00
Palestine Information Office, The

PLO: A Brief Survey
Documents & Statements, 1979 ... \$1.00
National Lawyers Guild 1977 Middle East Delegation, Treatment of Palestinians in Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza \$4.50
Abdul Wahab Al-Messeri (editor) *A lover from Palestine and other Poems* \$3.00
Fawaz Turki, *Tal Zaatar was the Hill of Thyme* (poems) \$4.00
Fawaz Turki, *The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile* \$4.00
Free Palestine, Tal al Zaatar; *The Fight Against Fascism* \$4.00
Hatem Hussaini (ed.). *Towards Peace in Palestine* \$1.00

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